Hinkley Point C Project
Helping Britain Achieve Net Zero

# Meeting Report

**Regarding:**

EDF Hinkley Point C:
Main Site Forum.

**Date & Venue:**

Thursday 15th February 2024 – 6pm
Meeting held at: Victory Hall, Stogursey, Bridgwater

**Participating:**

Doug Bamsey, *Chair*

Chris Ford (CF), *Stogursey Parish Council*

Allan Searle (AS), *Stogursey Parish Council*

Mike Laver (ML), *Burton resident*

John Burton (JB), *Somerset Council*

Sue Spicer (SS), *Burton resident*

Sue Goss (SG), *Stogursey Parish Council*

Richard Cuttell (RC), *West Hinkley Action Group*

Nicola Hale (NH), *Community Safety Officer, Somerset Council*

Jodie Burghes (JoB), *Local resident*

Valdo Andrade, *Avon & Somerset Police*

Ewan Love, *Avon & Somerset Police*

**EDF Team:**

Andrew Cockcroft (AC), *EDF*

Andrew Goodchild (AG), *EDF*

Drew Aspinwall (DA), *SEC Newgate UK*

Matthew Williams (MW), *SEC Newgate UK*

**Apologies received:**

None

In addition to the forum meeting notes and agendas, all presentations and reports are available at www.edfenergy.com/hpccommunity

| Item | | Action |
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| 1 | **Item 1 - Introductions** | |
| 1.1 | Doug Bamsey ('The Chair') welcomed everyone to the meeting, ran through the venue arrangements and forum protocols, and invited all attendees to introduce themselves. | |
| 2 | **Item 2 - Meeting Note and Matters Arising** | |
| 2.1 | The Chair reviewed the previous Main Site Forum meeting note from 19th October 2023 including the after-notes and invited any further comment.<br><br>There were no comments or amendments suggested to the meeting note. There followed a discussion with Valdo and Ewan from Avon & Somerset Police, during which members asked questions. | |
| 2.2 | The meeting note was agreed. | |
| 3 | **Item 3 - Project Progress Update – (Andrew Cockroft (AC), EDF)** | |
| 3.1 | **Dome lift**<br>Dome lift for Unit 1 was EDF's focus for 2023.<br>Weighing 245 tonnes, the dome was lifted into place in December. The lift was carefully planned to take advantage of a weather window to allow the manoeuvre to be completed in low wind conditions.<br><br>The Polar Crane is now protected and the reactor building is now weather-tight.<br>The lift marks a key point in the transition from civils to the mechanical and electrical phases. With the reactor building now watertight, this opens up the possibility of fitting more sensitive components. | |
| 3.2 | **Looking forward to 2024**<br>Andrew Cockcroft (AC) gave a look ahead to activity planned for 2024.<br>Following the arrival of reactor pressure vessel into Combwich in 2023, some even bigger components will arrive this year. The first two steam generators which are 30m in length will be brought in via Combwich and up the C182. The Polar crane will be used to fit the reactor pressure vessel onto the supports/base, ahead of the commissioning phase.<br>The MEH phase continues to expand, increasing the level of welding and electrical installation – some of progress will be more subtle and nuanced.<br>AC said the project team will do their best to make these updates to the fora as accessible as possible. | |
| 3.3 | **Schedule and cost update**<br>• Being the first to build a design adapted for UK regulations and restarting a nuclear industry after an almost 30-year pause has been harder than anticipated.<br>• The project has had to substantially adapt the design to meet British regulations, making 7,000 design changes, adding 35% more steel and 25% more concrete. In common with other major projects, the project has also been hit by inflation, labour and material shortages as well as the pandemic.<br>• Building something for the first time is hard, but repeating an identical design with the same people and suppliers is easier. AC said that by building an identical second unit, is typically be 20-30% faster. | |

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| | • The target for Unit 1 operation is 2029; the cost range (2015 values) is £31-34bn.<br><br>Mike Laver (ML) said that the true figure, inclusive of inflation, would be £46bn. AC agreed that if indexed against BoE figures then that would be the case. AC added that 2015 values are used to allow for comparable values.<br><br>ML said that EDF is making a big thing of cost to consumer won't increase, but in reality, he felt it would be £128 per MWh, up from £92 and stated that's an issue of credibility.<br><br>AC reinforced that capital costs are not borne by UK taxpayer.<br><br>ML quoted a story about French govt asking UK government to contribute more, AC noted that was a political discussion between Governments.<br><br>ML asked if there was a timescale projection for Unit 2? AC said that gap remains at 12 months. It is important to have and allows to manage the 2 units in terms of workforce, but also achieve some efficiency gains, transferring learnings and workforce between units. AC added that the efficiency gain is in the region of 20-30% which is a downward pressure on cost, so maintaining the gap is tactically important.<br><br>AC said that there were a number of reasons for the delay AC explained that going first in building a design adapted for UK regulations and restarting a nuclear industry after an almost 30-year pause has been harder than anticipated.<br>HPC have had to substantially adapt the design to meet British regulations, making 7,000 changes, adding 35% more steel and 25% more concrete – the final design was completed in 2023. In common with other major projects, Hinkley Point C has also been hit by inflation, labour and material shortages.<br><br>ML stated his surprise that the design was not approved by the regulator before construction. He added that the local community are having to experience living next to a construction site for an additional decade, and stated there was a need to revisit the property support scheme, based on what was agreed in 2015.<br><br>AC answered that one of other elements is the increase in workforce. There is an ongoing discussion, to understand the impacts of this and to develop mitigation for those potential impacts. AC added that the project won't take its 'foot off the gas' in terms of impact management on the local community.<br><br>SS asked whether Flamanville was working, or if AC knew when it would start operating. AC replied that the fuel loading phase was underway, and to his knowledge it should be operational towards the end of 2024. | |
| **3.4** | **People update**<br><br>AC said that he will bring full details to the fora of initial proposals for workforce uplift, and mitigation proposals. He hopes to do that in Spring 2024. The project is continuing to see a high proportion of local people (circa 3,500) working on project. There has been a promotional campaign featuring local workers on bus stops and billboards.<br><br>Sue Goss (SG) asked what AC's definition of local was, did he mean within 90 minutes travel? AC said yes, and Andrew Goodchild (AG) added that about 70% of those 3,500 come from the traditional districts of Sedgemoor, West Somerset and Taunton Deane. | |

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| | SG then asked if there were figures for West Somerset, AG said he would check but he understood these to be about 8%.<br><br>Post meeting note, the former West Somerset district does currently contribute 8% of the home based workforce which is around 300 people.<br><br>AC mentioned a data set showing the number Under 25s on the project, of which circa 1,400 were local, although he didn't have the breakdown of local / non-local.<br>The Chair suggested this data could potentially be presented at a future Community Forum.<br><br>SS asked if all 1,300 apprentices were working on site?<br>AC replied that this number refers to the total number trained, and it's hard to track once the apprenticeship is complete, as they then start employment with a Tier 1 contractor on site or start employment locally or elsewhere.<br><br>Jodie Burghes (JoB) – is a parent governor (and co-Chair of governors) at Stogursey Primary School, said the school would like greater links with the project, and requested if a visit could be arranged?<br>AC said he would be happy to help with this. | **ACTION AC**<br><br>**ACTION AC** |
| **4** | **Item 4: HPC Development Consent Order Material Change consultation (Andrew Goodchild (AG), EDF)** | |
| **4.1** | Andrew Goodchild (AG) outlined the changes that were being proposed as part of the Development Consent Order Material Change, both on and off site. | |
| **4.2** | **Interim Spent Fuel Store and Equipment Storage Building**<br>AG outlined the major change here was the change to the way spent fuel is stored – from a wet storage method in pools, to dry storage in concrete and steel canisters.<br><br>Also proposed is replacing the previous Access Control Building with a new Equipment Storage building to store, transport and handle equipment used when spent fuel is transferred to the Interim Spent Fuel Store.<br><br>ML asked if the vessels being used were transport flasks, and if the intention was for those to be transported.<br><br>AG said they are capable of being transported, and they won't be necessary to unpack them before being moved.<br><br>ML then said as there is no national repository for these, suggesting the flasks would need to have a lifespan of 100 years?<br>AG replied that the project needed to have a fuel store that could take all fuel from both reactors for 60 years of the power station and the casks were designed to house the spent fuel while it cools.<br><br>ML said his concern was not capacity but containment, to which AG replied, the casks themselves are radiologically sound and structurally tough; and that this is one of reasons for the nature of building changes. In a wet store, there is a need for aircraft protection shell going over the top of pool; by contrast the casks themselves could withstand natural disaster or a plane crash.<br><br>ML then raised that the canister seals would need to last for 100 years, and the building doesn't have nature of control for release/contamination.<br><br>AG replied that the project has received radioactive substances consent. There is negligible difference between the two types of storage in terms of discharge into atmosphere. | |

AC added that there is longer term experience of dealing with dry storage in the US, in use since the 1980s. Historical records of how robust those casks are over long period of time, and more detail is available. Not an experimental nor is the UK the first country to use dry storage, in fact dry storage has been used at Wylfa on Anglesey since the 1960s.

SG asked for an explanation as to why lowering the building so that is underground isn't possible, so the height of the facility could be smaller. There are examples elsewhere, so why couldn't EDF do this at HPC?

AG replied that dry storage is a passive system without need for personnel or mechanical management. It effectively takes care of itself, whereas that is not the case with a wet store. A deep Geological Disposal Facility would require a mechanical and personnel led intervention system, unable to be passive. The proposed dry store is 5m taller, there is a potential option already discussed with SG, of moving the building back into the site slightly to minimise the issue of visual impact from the coastal path – this is something he will actively look at and respond to, as it is one way of reducing the impact.

SG asked how air would circulate, as the proposed building doesn't have any windows.
AG responded that it has vents as does the dry store at Sizewell B, which allows air to passively circulate. With any underground / basement design, a mechanical system would have to be introduced.

SG said the dry store is a good idea, but asked again, why couldn't this be done underground and asked if it was an issue of cost.
AG replied that expense was not the main factor but introduction of mechanical and human elements.
AC added that the nuclear industry has a lot of experience of these types of dry store. From a regulatory perspective, the Environment Agency regard this as the best available technology, and that SG's suggested configuration would introduce an element of uncertainty.

The Chair encouraged this type of question, could be submitted as a comment as part of the consultation process.

Chris Ford (CF) said that it seems clear that dry store is larger than the reactor buildings.
AG responded that the top of reactor is 64m tall while the dry store is 35m tall.
CF would argue that reactor buildings are not much larger; the turbine hall is 30m.

Richard Cuttell (RC) said that wet store would introduce personnel; 400 people running plant when operational on a daily basis (AG – 900 operational workforce); what's the difference in extra to manage the wet store?
AG said that the project could do that, but there is a fine balance between benefits; the original DCO in 2013 scale was tipped towards wet store, under review that balance is tipped in favour of dry storage (e.g. what's done at Sizewell B).

RC then asked if the airflow was interrupted by adverse weather, how long before there is a potential problem?
AC replied that from the US experience, where they keep theirs in a desert setting, without a building, which suggests adverse weather is not an issue.

SS asked what there was against having the building put into a dugout, reducing the ground level.
AG replied that this would mean a mechanical system would be needed. Proximity to other buildings and lack of space to dig down.

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| | AC added that would be a novel approach to these things; that would be a more experimental approach.<br><br>AG said this would affect the ability to deal with a 1 in 10,000 year weather event / flood, and would require an entire redesign of the power station and noted the system of underground galleries are already there and a drainage system is in place underground to ensure that any floodwater wouldn't enter any vital buildings.<br><br>RC said but HPC only finalised the design 2 months ago?<br>AG clarified that this meant the design of what goes in the buildings, not the layout of the buildings themselves.<br><br>The Chair thanked members for their questions so far.<br><br>JB referred to the drainage channel and asked if there was the possibility to put trees there?<br>AG said that trees close to the site boundary would have security implications and as a consequence was not something that would be considered. | |
| **4.3** | **Meteorological Mast and Substation**<br>AG outlined that the meteorological mast was being retained, but advances in technology would mean that it could be of a height of 10m rather than 50m. It is proposed to be in a new location.<br><br>RC asked why a meteorological mast is needed, to which AG replied that the project needs one to understand prevailing weather conditions, and that it is a requirement of the safety case to have live and accurate site-based meteorological information. | |
| **4.4** | **Sluice Gates**<br>AG set out how the project is proposing to add four new storage racks to store the sluice gates and their lifting beams when not in use. Sluice gates would support the maintenance of Hinkley Point C's cooling water system by holding back sea water. They would only be used when the reactors are shut down to carry out maintenance and refuelling. | |
| **4.5** | **Removal of Acoustic Fish Deterrent**<br>AG then moved to off-site measures, starting with the removal of the Acoustic Fish Deterrent. Its removal is being proposed driven by both safety and environmental factors. In terms of safety, the Bristol Channel has poor underwater visibility and one of the highest tidal rangers in the world. The safe installation and maintenance of the sound projectors underwater and two miles offshore would pose unacceptable risks to divers for 60 years. | |
| **4.6** | **Saltmarsh creation and enhancement; Pawlett Hams & 'The Island'**<br>AG continued by talking about the habitat creation and enhancement measures.<br>Saltmarsh is coastal grassland that is regularly flooded by seawater, and EDF are proposing to create or enhance around 340 hectares of saltmarsh and associated habitat in two locations along the River Parrett; at Pawlett Hams and 'The Island'.<br><br>AG added that the project was keen to understand people's views on this, throughout this year to develop design for this area as they head towards the application itself.<br><br>ML asked who is going to manage this area.<br>AG replied that the project is looking to partner with someone; but no-one is in mind at this stage.<br>The Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust (WWT) manage Steart Marsh, so this could be an option.<br>EDF will finance the ongoing operation and maintenance, but EDF does manage land in and around fleet, so capability is there but they would employ specialist team if that is needed.<br><br>ML pointed out that this isn't a small undertaking. | |

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| | AG said that conversations are ongoing about this; a detailed design is needed, and lessons from WWT are important, and the reported that the project team has a meeting with them the day after the Main Site Forum (16 February 2024).<br><br>JB asked if AG envisages having a detailed design before the application is submitted to the Secretary of State?<br>AG said that the design will need to be detailed enough to calculate what the benefit to fish might be; some minor details may want to be reserved. The DCO approach allows a mixed approach to be taken, but much of it will need to be done to answer any concerns raised. | |
| **4.7** | **Compensation measures – marine**<br>EDF are proposing to create or enhance around 1-2 hectares or native oyster beds, and suitable areas around the coast of the Severn Estuary will be assessed. This is important as approximately 95% of native oyster beds have been lost; oysters are an important species that support the wider ecosystem.<br>In addition, EDF are proposing to create or enhance around 15 hectares of kelp forest; a brown coloured seaweed found across the UK coast. It is another important species that supports the wider ecosystem, aids coastal defence, and plays a vital role in the maintenance of fish stocks.<br>Finally, the creation or enhancement of around 5 hectares of seagrass habitat is being proposed in shallow waters.<br><br>AG added that no sites have been identified as yet, evidence suggests trials are needed to see what works. Some detail from the Crown Estate would need to be provided. Rights within the DCO regarding sea kelp to prevent dredging may have to be secured. All of these have been done before elsewhere but not as proposed package and on this scale.<br><br>ML said he couldn't imagine these would be created in the Bristol Channel.<br>AG replied that there are native oyster beds at Porlock, and also in Welsh waters. He agreed that detailed assessment needs to be done as daylight is necessary, therefore creating these further afield might be needed but the project is working with universities who specialise in this to ensure that the solution works. | |
| **4.8** | **Easement of fish migration barriers**<br>AG said that weirs in rivers can create barriers to the movement and migration of fish and this can be harmful to local fish populations by limiting their access to their spawning or feeding habitats. The restoration of natural river environments is seen as a vital consideration in the management of fish populations. Work is therefore being proposed on three weirs; Maisemore Weir on the River Severn, Trostrey Weir on the River Usk and one further weir on either the River Lugg, River Towy or River Severn.<br>AG outlined that there has been engagement with the relevant local authorities about this proposal, and questions were raised about fish tagging to see how many fish are actually making it up river as far as those weirs. | |
| **4.9** | **Documents, plans and consultation events**<br><br>AG then ran through the various consultation documents and the in-person and online consultation events that have taken place. He highlighted the virtual consultation room and where people might access those documents online.<br><br>SS asked if there are many acoustic fish deterrents in operation, and where are they.<br>AG gave two examples, in Pembroke, and Belgium. Both are in much shallower water and much closer into land. The one in Pembroke is attached to a dock side, with lifting mechanism built-in. The one in Belgium is on an inlet, sitting on a concrete pad. AG said the tidal range in Bristol channel is a major issue in this regard. | |

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| | SS asked if they were effective?<br>AG replied that he understands that they are, but the sediment and silt in the Bristol channel is a major issue. The maintenance regime in these other locations is much less rigorous. | |
| **4.10** | **Other engagement and responses**<br>AG then showed members the list of other external organisations with whom the project had engaged during the process. He also outlined how members could submit their responses, with the deadline being 23:59 on 29 February 2024.<br><br>RC asked whether the number of fish being harmed being equivalent to one small trawler; if that was for the life of the power station?<br>AG replied that it means one per year.<br><br>RC then asked that the reference to the term 'relatively low' being stated, was relative to what?<br>AG responded that 46 tonnes of fish is the worst case scenario based on 40 years of data on Hinkley Point B based on the Environment Agency's methodology.<br>In UK waters, 640,000 tonnes of fish were landed last year; plus include number of fish landed in 20 biggest ports in the UK, the 3 in the SW that's 330,000 tonnes in addition to a million rod licences in England issued each year by the EA. That works out at less than 0.1% of fish taken by UK vessels, that figure decreases if you add in rod licences.<br><br>JoB asked what type of fish?<br>AG replied that there are over 100 species in the Bristol channel; ones particularly affected ones that detect sound include shad, Atlantic cod and salmon, sea bass. There are 7 species that are most relevant.<br><br>JoB then asked whether mitigation measures would include those species?<br>AG replied that shad and salmon would be helped by the removal of weirs;<br>sea bass helped by saltmarsh, cod helped by sea kelp and sea grass.<br>The mitigation has been shaped by the species affected by the removal of acoustic fish deterrent. | |
| **4.11** | **Next steps**<br>AG then explained the next steps in the DCO Material Change process.<br><br>ML asked if the presentation slides could be circulated, which the Chair agreed would happen after the meeting.<br>**AFTERNOTE** The presentation slides were circulated on 16 February 2024 to MSF members.<br><br>SG asked about the deflectograph survey on the C182 data from highways and whether this had been received?<br>AG replied that he chased last week but hasn't received a response yet.<br><br>SG cited concerns about the state of the C182.<br><br>RC mentioned a lack of drainage on C182, water stands and when it rains there's a lot of surface water. Why wait for an accident.<br><br>John Burton (JB) said he has made a note of this and will pass it on.<br><br>SG then asked as highways receive funds from EDF, surely EDF can put pressure on them to ensure things happen.<br><br>AG said that the results of deflectograph survey will be shared at an appropriate forum, the next | |

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| | steps are for Somerset Council to ask to access the money that is available as per the s106 agreement to maintain road. EDF will may funds available in accordance with the section 106 agreement, but the results of survey are needed first and proposal as what is to be done.<br><br>The Chair thanked members for good questions and debate. | |
| **5** | **Item 5 – Any Other Business**<br>The Chair invited any items of any other business. | |
| **6** | **Item 6 – Date of Next Meeting**<br><br>The next Main Site Forum is scheduled for Thursday 20 June at 6pm. | |
| **6.1** | The meeting ended. | |